

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COLOMB 02654 261006Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5314

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PORG, EAID, VN, VS

SUBJECT: COLOMBO PLAN AND VIETNAM

REF: COLOMBO 2940

1. THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLOMBO PLAN COUNCIL FOR
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA,
INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR ADLINSJAH JENIE, HAS CIRCULATED
THE FOLLOWING LETTER, DATED JULY 22 AND MARKED "STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL" TO EACH OF HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE COUNCIL:
QUOTE:

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE:

1. THE DIRECTOR, COLOMBO PLAN BUREAU, HAS RAISED WITH
ME THE POSITION OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
IN RELATION TO COLOMBO PLAN MEMBERSHIP, SINCE THE QUESTION
OF WHETHER TO INVITE THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR TO ATTEND
COUNCIL MEETINGS NOW ARISES IMMEDIATELY AS WELL AS THE
FURTHER PROBLEM OF AN INVITATION TO VIETNAM IN DUE COURSE
TO ATTEND THE NEXT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING.

2. NORTH VIETNAM WAS NOT OF COURSE A MEMBER OF THE
COLOMBO PLAN. SOUTH VIETNAM JOINED IN 1951 AND, IN
THE ABSENCE OF ANY INDICATION TO THE CONTRARY FROM
THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 02654 261006Z

VIETNAM, WAS STILL A MEMBER AT THE TIME OF THE UNIFICATION

OF VIETNAM.

3. THE COLOMBO PLAN HAS NO WRITTEN CONSTITUTION AND QUESTIONS OF MEMBERSHIP APPEAR TO BE DECIDED PRAGMATICALLY. THE QUESTION THEREFORE NOW ARISES WHETHER COLOMBO PLWP MEMBERS WOULD, IN GENERAL, BE PREPARED TO REGARD THE UNIFIED STATE OF VIETNAM AS A MEMBER OF THE COLOMBO PLAN BY VIRTUE OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTH VIETNAM. ALTERNATIVELY, WOULD IT BE CONSIDERED PREFERABLE TO REGARD VIETNAMESE MEMBERSHIP AS HAVING LAPSED AND TO LEAVE IT TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO PUT IN A FRESH APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IT IT WISHES TO DO SO?

4. RELEVANT TO THIS ISSUE IS OF COURSE THE ATTITUDE OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT ITSELF TO COLOMBO PLAN MEMBERSHIP. I FELT, HOWEVER, THAT BEFORE SOUNDING OUT THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR ABOUT HIS GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO TAKE SOME SOUNDINGS AMONG MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

5. I SHOULD THEREFORE BE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD LET ME KNOW WHETHER YOU WOULD SEE ANY OBJECTION TO MY HAVING AN INFORMAL WORD WITH THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR AND ALSO WHETHER YOU HAVE ANY STRONG VIEWS ON WHETHER THE VIETNAMESE SHOULD SEND IN A NEW APPLICATION FOR COLOMBO PLAN MEMBERSHIP, IF THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THE PLAN. IN VIEW OF THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE I WOULD NOT EXPECT TO SEE THE AMBASSADOR UNTIL ABOUT THE END OF AUGUST.

S/S ADLINSJAH HENIE

PRESIDENT

H.E. MR. HOHN H. REED

AMBASSADOR FOR THE UNITED STATES

AMERICAN EMBASSY

COLOMBO 3

END QUOTE.

3. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE FOR A REPLY TO AMBASSADOR JENIE, BY THE END OF AUGUST, AS HE SUGGESTS. OUR OWN FEELING IS THAT DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SKIRT THE LEGAL ISSUES INVOLVED, AT LEAST UNTIL THE ANNUAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COLOMB 02654 261006Z

MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE IN DECEMBER. IT MAY BE THAT OUR OVER-ALL ATTITUDE WILL BE INFLUENCED, AT LEAST IN PART, BY THE COURSE OF US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS DURING THIS TIME FRAME. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOUNDINGS MAY INDICATE A DEFINITE LACK OF INTEREST BY THE SRV IN PURSUING COLOMBO PLAN MEMBERSHIP. ACCORDINGLY, WE SUGGEST THAT AMBASSADOR JENIE BE INFORMED-PERHAPS ORALLY RATHER THAN IN WRITING, IF THE DEPARTMENT SO WISHES-THAT IN

PRINCIPLE WE SEE NO OBJECTION TO HIS TAKING INFORMAL
SOUNDINGS WITH THE VIETNAMESE CHARGE HERE, TO
ASCERTAIN HIS COUNTRY'S INTENTIONS, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING
THAT THE US RESERVES ITS POSITION COMPLETELY ON THE
LEGAL QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MIGHT APPROVE A SORT OF DE FACTO ACCESSION BASED ON THE
OLD SOUTH VIETNAMESE MEMBERSHIP OR WHETHER WE WOULD TAKE
THE POSITION THAT A NEW APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED.
REED

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